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probably universally remembered. It was natural then that, when Dryden was composing his verses in praise of the arch-enemy of Charles, he should call to mind the famous picture, and, recollecting the detail of the palms, he should write antithetically of his hero:

"His palms, though under weights they *did not* stand,  
Still thrived."

This interpretation has the two-fold merit of clearing up an otherwise inexplicable difficulty in Dryden's poem, and of bringing to light an interesting point of connection between that poem and the life of the time in which it was composed.

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#### A DATE IN THE CAREER OF J. A. DE BAÏF.

In the May number of MOD. LANG. NOTES (p. 146), Mr. Edgar S. Ingraham calls attention to a certain difficulty with regard to a date in the career of Baïf. In a sonnet addressed to Muret, the poet states that he wrote the *Amours de Méline*.

sur les rives de Seine,  
Lorsque neuf mois je contoy sur vingt ans.<sup>1</sup>

This last line has been interpreted by Becq de Fouquières and Marty-Laveaux to mean 'twenty years and nine months.' As Baïf was born in February, 1532, he would then have been engaged in writing his sonnets to Méline in November, 1552. It is a little startling, then, to find the work completed and actually printed as early as the tenth of the next month.<sup>2</sup> This is indeed rushing into print, and an eager longing for poetical glory, as Becq de Fouquières puts it, would hardly account for such haste. Mr. Ingraham believes he has found a better way out of the difficulty. According to him, both Becq de Fouquières and Marty-Laveaux were wrong in interpreting as they did the line quoted above. *Sur* is used here, as not unfrequently in old and modern French, with the idea of 'toward' temporal. *Neuf mois sur vingt*

*ans* does not mean twenty years and nine months, but nine months in the direction of twenty, that is, nineteen years and nine months. This does away with the difficulty as to the date of publication, and at the same time Baïf cannot but gain by it: his *Amours de Méline* are far from being his best work, and it is only justice to his reputation to date them as early as possible in his career.

The interpretation proposed by Mr. Ingraham seems, on the face of it, very plausible (although he does not adduce any instances where *sur* meaning 'toward' temporal is qualified by a preceding numeral). And yet there is little doubt that both Becq de Fouquières and Marty-Laveaux were right. The text quoted by Mr. Ingraham and which has been adopted by all modern editors results from a later correction. In the original edition of 1552, the line in question stands thus:

[ces vers]

Que ie, feru d'un fier diuin visage  
Chante suyuant le riuage de Seine  
Or que vingt ans ie franchi de neuf moys.<sup>3</sup>

This at least is very clear: Baïf meant that he was then twenty years and nine months old. The same passage, in its original form, gives us, too, a very easy solution of the difficulty as to the date of publication. Note that the sonnet to Muret is placed in 1552 at the end of the First Book as a kind of conclusion, and further that all the verbs are in the present tense: clearly *ie chante* does not refer us to the time of composition, but to the date of publication. It is when the poet is about to hand his manuscript, possibly completed for some time already, over to the printer that he exclaims: "Moi, Baïf, âgé de vingt ans et neuf mois, je chante l'amour dans mon livre de Sonnets." In later editions he referred all that to the past and wrote: "*l'alloy chantant . . . lorsque ie contoy . . .*" But he simply meant thereby that it was at the age of twenty years and nine months that he published his first volume of verse.

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<sup>1</sup> Ed. Marty-Laveaux, Vol. I, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> This is the date of the privilege.—But the book bears the date 1552.

<sup>3</sup> Marty-Laveaux, Vol. I, p. 402, n. 18. "Le texte [of the sonnet to Muret] a été assez profondément modifié," says Marty-Laveaux; but he quotes only the three lines which I have given above.